

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 005395

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/30/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SY](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN ARGUES LIMITING REFORM DIALOGUE SCOPE COULD
DRAW IN EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA

Classified By: Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm for Reasons 1.4 (b),(d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) King Abdullah and Foreign Minister Muasher argued to A/S Burns in separate meetings June 27 that the best way for the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) initiative to succeed is to draw in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The best way to do this, the King and Muasher argued, is to view G-8 engagement with Arab countries as a subset of a wider effort, and as a first step organize a Ministerial meeting of G-8 plus Arabs only in the fall. They argued strongly that this was the best way to get a workable process off the ground. Insisting on a wider geographic scope for an initial Ministerial meeting would lead to a stalemate, and isolate the smaller Arab states. END SUMMARY.

KING: ENGAGE EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA

2. (C) NEA A/S Burns met with King Abdullah June 27 in at his palace in Aqaba. Burns thanked the King for his participation in the Sea Island summit and his support for reform in the region. The King said that the Arab leaders at the summit "felt much better" about U.S. reform efforts after hearing President Bush discuss current thinking on the BMENA, but that it was still critical that the U.S. more actively engage both Egypt and Saudi Arabia on the subject. The King noted that he had recently tried calling Egyptian President Mubarak, but had been unable to reach him.

MUASHER: LIMITING BMENA SCOPE IS KEY

3. (S) Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher told A/S Burns and the Ambassador June 27 that the participation of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the (BMENA) initiative was important to its success. If you keep the regional reform effort focused on Jordan, Bahrain, and Yemen, he continued, it will have less legitimacy and will put great political pressure on those governments. The best way to draw Egypt and Saudi Arabia into the dialogue, Muasher argued, is to limit the geographical scope of an initial BMENA Ministerial meeting to Arab countries -- at least at the outset. "Get Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the door, then make your move" to expand the initiative. He argued that the G-8 can include whatever countries it wants in the BMENA initiative, "but don't put them all in the same room" at first.

4. (C) Muasher asked about the size of the U.S. financial commitments behind the various proposals put forward at Sea Island, especially the microfinance initiative which Jordan has offered to lead. It is important for the G-8 to support its proposals in a concrete way.

PALACE OFFICIAL: REFORM NEEDS THE BIG ARAB STATES

5. (S) In a separate meeting June 27, the Director of the newly established Royal Palace Office of Policy Coordination, Abdullah Woreikat, echoed Muasher's comments to PolCouns. Woreikat said that King Abdullah was very pleased with the Sea Island event, but felt that the reform effort would have more weight and legitimacy in the region if other, larger Arab states -- particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia -- participated actively. The King, according to Woreikat, is enthusiastic about the Forum for the Future, but fears that Saudi Arabia and Egypt will not participate if it includes non-Arab regional partners.

COMMENT

6. (C) Following the King's participation at Sea Island, Jordan has a real stake in BMENA's success and in drawing in larger and more influential Arab states. The Jordanians have consistently argued that regional reform efforts will have greater credibility in the Arab world if they do not appear

to be Western attacks on Islam and continue to believe firmly that limiting the main BMENA participation to Arab states -- at least at the start -- offers the best chance of success.

17. (U) A/S Burns has cleared this message.

Visit Embassy Amman's classified website at

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/>
or access the site through the State Department's SIPRNET
home page.

GNEHM